

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /081 W
-----071046 160236Z /65

P R 151531Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9124
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 5391

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, GH
SUBJ: ACHEAMPONG STANDS BY TWO-YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD FOR
RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE

REF: ACCRA 5367

1. SUMMARY: AT JULY 14 MEETING WITH STRIKING
PROFESSIONALS, ACHEAMPONG HELD FAST TO TWO-YEAR
TRANSITION PERIOD TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. HE DEMANDED
STRIKERS RETURN TO WORK BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS WITH
GOVERNMENT WERE RESUMED AND FROZE ASSETS OF PROFESSIONALS'
ASSOCIATION. IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THESE ACTIONS WILL
PROBABLY BE TO HARDEN PROFESSIONALS' RESOLVE TO
UNSEAT ACHEAMPONG. END SUMMARY.

2. AT JULY 14 MEETING, HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG TOLD
MEMBERS OF STRIKING ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES
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THAT SMC WAS DETERMINED TO ENSURE THAT ITS TWO-YEAR
PROGRAM FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT
(REFTEL) WAS IMPLEMENTED SUCCESSFULLY. HE WARNED THAT
"NO AMOUNT OF SUBVERSION WIL DETER THE GOVERNMENT" AND
CAUTIONED AGAINST A HURRIED TRANSFER FO POWER WHICH,
HE SAID, WOULD ANTAGONIZE THE ARMED FORCES AND POLICE.
IF THESE INSTITUTIONS WITHDREW THEIR SERVICES, HE

ADDED, THERE WOULD BE COMPLETE CHAOS IN COUNTRY.

3. ACEHAMPOG ALSO TOLD ASSOCIATION ITS STRIKING MEMBERS WOULD HAVE TO RETRUN TO WORK BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS COULD RESUME BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS AND GOVERNMENT. HE SAID SMC WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT AN INTERNATIONAL BODY TO SUPERVISE REFERENDUM SLATED FOR MARCH 30, 1978; THIS WOULD ALLAY FEARS THAT SMC MIGHT MANIPULATE REFERENDUM FOR ITS OWN ENDS. ACHEAMPONG ALSO NOTED THAT "SINCE THE PROFESSIONAL BODIES DO NOT REPRESENT THE ENTIRE POPULATION, THE MASSES MUST ALSO BE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DETERMINE WHAT FORM OF GOVERNMENT THEY WANT."

4. IN A SEPARATE BUT CLEARLY RELATED ACTION JULY 14, ACHEAMPONG ALSO FROZE THE ASSETS AND BANK ACCOUNTS OF THE PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION. THIS IS A FOLLOWUP TO HIS JULY 6 REPEAL OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES REGISTRATION DECREE, A STEP TAKEN TO UNDERCUT THE LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

5. COMMENT: WE UNDERSATND JULY 14 MEETING WAS STORMY AND THAT PROFESSIONALS HAVE REJECTED ACHEAMPONG'S STAND AS UNACCEPTABLE, HOLDING OUT FOR TRANSFER OF POWER BY THE END OF 1977. WE DOUBT FREEZING OF ASSOCIATION'S ASSETS WILL HAVE MUCH PROACTICAL EFFECT
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AND MAY ONLY STIFFEN THE PROFESSIONALS' RESOLVE. IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WILL RETURN TO WORK UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, EVEN THOUGH THERE WILL BE SOME PRESSURE FROM MODERATE MEMBERS--ESPECIALLY SENIRO DOCTORS--TO DO SO ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ACCRA05391
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770253-0689
Format: TEL
From: ACCRA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770755/aaaabvhd.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c166566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ACCRA 5367
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1854789
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACHEAMPONG STANDS BY TWO-YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, GH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c166566b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009